DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 157 072 CS 204 227

AUTHOR Laidlaw, Carole
TITLE Curriculum Guide for Teaching Gifted Children Literature in Grades One through Three. Updated Edition.
INSTITUTION California State Dept. of Education, Sacramento.
PUB DATE 78
NOTE 35p.
AVAILABLE FROM Publications Sales, California State Department of Education, P.O. Box 271, Sacramento, California 95802 ($0.65)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 Plus Postage. HC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS Book Reviews; *Childrens Books; Childrens Literature; Creative Writing; Critical Reading; *Curriculum Guides; Discussion (Teaching Technique); Fiction; *Gifted; Language Arts; *Learning Activities; Literary Analysis; *Literature Appreciation; Primary Education; *Teaching Techniques

ABSTRACT

Lessons directed toward the development of literary and interpretive skills in gifted children in grades one through three are described in this guide. The guide contains an introductory session and ten lessons designed to help children learn about three elements of plot (story line, buildup, and theme), the roles played by story characters, story mood and tone, elements of suspense and surprise, figurative and descriptive language, point of view, first-person and third-person stories, and mystery stories. The lessons include suggestions for discussion questions, activities, and recommended reading. The guide also suggests methods for helping students write original stories as a culminating project to the study of literature, learn to write simple book reviews, and evaluate the books they read. (GW)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED157072

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

literature

CURRICULUM GUIDE FOR TEACHING GIFTED CHILDREN LITERATURE IN GRADES ONE THROUGH THREE

Prepared under the direction of the
Gifted and Talented Education Management Team
CALIFORNIA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

California State Dept. of Education

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) AND USERS OF THE ERIC SYSTEM."

CSDE 227

This publication, which was funded primarily under Public Law 93-380, Section 404, was edited and prepared for photo-offset production by the Bureau of Publications, California State Department of Education, and was published by the Department, 721 Capitol Mall, Sacramento, CA 95814. State funds were used for the review and updating of the copy for this publication. The original version was funded under the provisions of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, Title V.

Printed by the Office of State Printing
and distributed under the provisions of
the Library Distribution Act

1978

Copies of this publication are available for 65 cents each, plus sales tax for California residents, from Publications Sales, California State Department of Education, P.O. Box 271, Sacramento, CA 95802. A list of publications available from the Department may be obtained by writing to the same address.

Information about publications in the gifted education series can be found on page 29.

Foreword

A primary goal in California public schools is to provide equal opportunity for *all* students to become proficient in basic skills and knowledgeable in basic subjects. In our efforts to achieve this goal, we must provide programs of sufficient scope and depth to permit children to learn at their own rate and to the full measure of their ability.

As a group, gifted students have unique educational needs, many of which can be met only by the provision of a high degree of flexibility in the programs designed for them. Several years ago the Department of Education directed and coordinated a federally funded project for the development of curriculum materials needed in programs for the gifted. The 1970 edition of this curriculum guide was a product of those efforts.

I am pleased that the Department has another opportunity to help the gifted by publishing the 1978 edition of the *Curriculum Guide for Teaching Gifted Children Literature in Grades One Through Three*. I am confident that this updated publication will prove to be as valuable as its predecessor in efforts to help gifted children realize their potential.

Superintendent of Public Instruction

Preface

This curriculum guide, which was originally planned and completed in 1970 as part of a project under provisions of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, Title V, was updated this year as part of a Public Law 93-380, Section 404, project, Development of Teaching Competencies—Gifted and Talented Education. The guide is intended for use by the teachers of students whose general mental ability places them in the top 2 percent of all boys and girls.

Curriculum Guide for Teaching Gifted Children Literature in Grades One Through Three is one of a series of curriculum guides for use by teachers of mentally gifted students. The 1970 edition of the guide was written by Bonnie J. Deming and Jack L. Klein, San Diego City Unified School District. They prepared the guide under the direction of John C. Gowan, Professor of Education, and his assistant, Joyce Sonntag, Assistant Professor of Education, both of San Fernando Valley State College (now California State University, Northridge). The guide was updated by Carole Laidlaw, Capistrano Unified School District under the direction of Paul D. Plowman, Consultant, Gifted and Talented Education, California State Department of Education; and director of the project.

DAVIS W. CAMPBELL
Deputy Superintendent for Programs

J. WILLIAM MAY
Assistant Superintendent; and Director, Office Of Curriculum Services

REX C. FORTUNE
Associate Superintendent for Secondary Education Programs

SIEG F. EFKEN
Program Manager of the Gifted and Talented Education Management Team

Contents

	Page
Foreword	iii
Preface	v
Introduction to the Guide	1
Literary and Interpretive Skills	2
Introductory Lesson	2
Lesson One: Introduction to Plot—The Story Line	3
Lesson Two: Introduction to Plot—The Buildup	5
Lesson Three: Introduction to Plot—Influence of Theme	7
Lesson Four: Identification and Discussion of Character Traits	8
Lesson Five: Recognition of Feelings, Moods, and Story Tone	10
Lesson Six: The Fun of Discovery	12
Lesson Seven: Figurative and Descriptive Language	13
Lesson Eight: Point of View	16
Lesson Nine: First-Person and Third-Person Stories	18
Lesson Ten: Analysis of Mystery Stories	21
Culminating Project: Writing an Original Story	23
Discussion	23
Suggested Story Sequence	23
Activities	24
Personal-Interest Reading	25

Introduction to the Guide

An obvious and widely accepted motivation for children to learn to read and understand literature is simply the "enjoyment of reading a good book." Recreational reading is indeed a worthwhile habit for children to acquire, but this acquisition hardly represents the ultimate reason for teaching literary skills.

In a broad sense the educational objectives for gifted pupils are similar to those for all children; namely, to achieve academic competence at the highest possible level and to use this competence in personal, intellectual, and creative endeavors.

When we consider how dependent we are on our ability to understand and interpret recorded language, we begin to realize how important it is for us to improve our reading skills. This guide provides teachers with some ideas for teaching literary skills on a much higher intellectual plane than merely that of comprehension, speed, and accuracy.

Children who are taught the material contained in this publication can be expected to accomplish the following objectives:

- To become highly selective in choosing books and other materials for their reading experiences
- To identify and evaluate the inherent social and moral implications of a literary work
- To distinguish certain styles of expression and certain dramatic techniques that are characteristic of various authors
- To evaluate various aspects of human relationships in a given piece of fictional writing on the basis of (a) the behavior of the characters in the story; and (b) interactions among the characters in the story
- To identify, analyze, and synthesize the plot, theme, and organizational pattern of a story
- To describe the interdependence and mutual influences of local color, setting, mood, author's point of view, subplots, problems, conflicts, and other components of literature
- To recognize ways in which sociological environment influences the behavior of story characters and to understand how this environment can influence the behavior of people in real life

2—77122

Literary and Interpretive Skills

The teaching approaches and learning activities suggested in this section are directed toward the development of literary and interpretive skills among gifted children in grades one through three.

Introductory Lesson

This lesson will help pupils define what they already know about how stories are written and will provide them with self-evaluation materials.

Discussion

1. Present to the pupils the question, What makes a good story?
2. Record responses.
3. Ask the children to suggest favorite books which fit the criteria they listed.
4. Ask the question, Do you want to add any more ideas to our list?
5. Note additional comments. Record ideas and keep the record for future reference.

Activities

1. The teacher may wish to tell the children: Your next assignment will be to write a story of your own. You may write about anything you wish. The story may be long or short, funny or sad—whatever you want to do with it. This will be your story. You will not receive a grade, but you will use the story in several ways, which will be explained later. *Note*: Sentence starters, pictures, topic sentences, sample titles, and the like may be used if necessary.
2. Each story should be read to the group and evaluated in terms of the criteria that have been established.
3. The children should be informed that they will have opportunities to evaluate, revise, and rewrite their own stories as they learn more of the writing techniques used by professional authors.
4. When all the stories have been discussed, Lesson One, concerning the story line in works of fiction, should be started.

Lesson One
Introduction to Plot—The Story Line

Lesson One is designed to acquaint children with the element of plot generally called the story line.

Discussion

1. *Setting.* The teacher may wish to state: I'm going to read part of a story which is probably familiar to all of you. "Once upon a time there was a little girl who was called Little Red Riding Hood. . . . Now one day her mother, who had been churning butter and baking cakes, said to her: 'My dear, put on your red cloak with the hood to it and take this cake and this pot of butter to your Grannie. . . .' But her grandmother lived some way off, and to reach the cottage Little Red Riding Hood had to pass through a vast, lonely forest." Questions that may be asked include:
   a. What part of the story do you think this part is?
   b. How does the author introduce the reader to the story?
   c. Who is in the story? What was she going to do? Where was she going?
   d. Let's call this picture of the whole story a diagram. Does anyone know what this long line is called? (*Story line* or any similar term would be acceptable.)

   e. Using this picture or story line, who can tell us what part of "Little Red Riding Hood" we have just talked about? Why? What do we call this part of the story? *Note:* Almost any story can be used because the setting is usually established within the first few paragraphs.
2. *Problem.* Any story needs a problem to be solved because without it there would be no story. We might have simply a description or the telling of an incident, but not a story. The teacher may wish to ask:
   a. What is the problem in "Little Red Riding Hood"?
   b. Where in this picture or story line would the problem be?
   c. What almost always happens in this part of any story?
3. *Climax.* Almost every story has one part, usually near the end, which is the most exciting part of the story. The reader is so interested that he or she just has to keep reading to find out

what happens or how the problem is solved. Now, where was this part in "Little Red Riding Hood"?

The children may not agree at all on how the problem was solved. It is this interplay of ideas and the opportunity to verbalize their thoughts that will give depth to the discussion; so the children should be allowed to disagree. Verbal and nonverbal communication is an important factor in this section.

4. *Ending (denouement).* After the climax has been reached, the problem in the story is solved; and, usually, the characters "live happily ever after." How was the problem solved in "Little Red Riding Hood"?

   There are several different versions of this fairy tale. Each child can express what he or she believes to be the ending of the story.

Activities

1. Select another familiar fairy tale and have the children retell it in their own words.
2. Have other children identify parts of the story with story-line sections.
3. Put the following on the chalkboard or on a chart:

SETTING	PROBLEM	CLIMAX	ENDING
Beginning (*who, when, where,* and so on).	Action starts.	Most exciting part; biggest problem.	Problem is solved. Story is closed.

4. Select a familiar story to be discussed and ask the children to study the story-line diagram again.
5. Ask whether the story fits into the sections or parts of the story line. How?
6. Continue the discussion to teach the concept that *any* story has form and organization, which are predetermined by the author.
7. Discuss the concepts, using other materials such as comic books; primers; picture books—Caldecott winners, for example; television shows; and motion pictures.
8. Compare editorials, magazine stories, newspaper articles, and other materials written for young people to determine which are stories; which, merely narrations; and which, factual accounts.

9. Have the children return to their original stories and evaluate the stories in terms of the concepts discussed. Ask whether each story has a complete story line.
10. Give the children an opportunity to edit or rewrite the first stories or begin new ones.

Recommended Reading (Lessons One and Two)

Aesop's Fables
Bears on Hemlock Mountain, by Alice Dalgliesh
By the Great Horn Spoon, by Sid Fleishman
The Maldonado Miracle, by Theodore Taylor
The North Wind and the Sun
Sam, Bangs and Moonshine, by Evaline Ness
The Three Little Pigs
Tolliver's Secret, by Esther W. Brady and Richard Cuffari
Tom Tit Tot, by Evaline Ness

Lesson Two
Introduction to Plot—The Buildup

The buildup is one of the most important ingredients in a work of fiction, whatever the length of the work.

Discussion

1. Ask, What is the plot of a story?
2. Name the four main parts of a story.
3. Reproduce the story-line diagram.

Now draw another story-line diagram, this time using curves to indicate high points of interest or tension.

4. Ask the following questions:
   a. Do most stories have just one exciting part or several high points of interest?
   b. How would you explain a story line such as this one?
   c. What do you think points A, B, C, and D represent?

d. Which point on the story line is the climax?
e. How do you think the high points that are marked A, B, C, and D are related to the climax?
f. Can you tell us what the *buildup* in a story means?

5. Summarize by stating that the *buildup* refers to the rising action in a story which leads to the climax.

Activities

1. Have the children recall parts of familiar stories, such as "Little Red Riding Hood," which can be considered part of the buildup.
2. Have the children read selections from their own stories for additional examples.
3. Select several sections from another well-known story, make copies of them, and have the children differentiate between rising action scenes and climax scenes. (The stories can also be recorded on a tape cassette and played for the children.)

Additional Discussion on Plot

The plot is planned by the author; a story is seldom merely the retelling of something that happens in real life. Ask the children: What would be wrong with a story in which an author told every little detail of what a person did, thought, or said in a conversation? Do you think that most incidents that happen to people follow a plan which has a beginning, a problem or middle, and an ending? Have the children tell of some interesting experiences they have had and let them decide whether or not they are stories. Could these experiences be used in stories? Why or why not?

Plot is a series of actions, not just one incident. A plot involves (a) a beginning; (b) a middle part or a series of generating circumstances; (c) a climax; and (d) an end to the conflict or interplay between opposing forces. The conflict is essential, for without it, without any problem, there is no plot. Every story must have a crisis, a situation of greatest suspense, which results in a climax and is followed by the denouement, or ending, where loose ends are tied together. The teacher may wish to:

1. Discuss buildup and opposing forces in "The Three Bears," "The Three Little Pigs," and the like.
2. Select sections from the children's own stories or familiar novels for examples.
3. Introduce the terms *generating circumstances* and *rising action* and decide how the terms might be shown on a story line.

Plot is dependent upon the delineation and development of the characters in a story. Specifically, the plot is (a) an accumulation of all the descriptions of actions which characters in the story perform; and (b) an account of the characters' words, thoughts, and feelings. The reader must be truly interested in story characters to identify with them. The teacher may wish to:

1. Read selections to the class which give vivid character descriptions.
2. Have the children write an original brief description of a well-known story character.
3. Have the children write a scene in which two characters describe another character.
4. Have the children write a description of their own feelings as if they were a main character in a famous story.

Lesson Three
Introduction to Plot–Influence of Theme

In this lesson the pupil considers the theme of the story; that is, the total meaning of a story.

Discussion

1. Share with the children the following statements:
   a. Crime does not pay.
   b. It is better to give than to receive.
   c. Honesty is the best policy.
   d. Bravery can overcome all obstacles.
2. Ask the children: Do you think that each of these sentences could be considered a moral or a lesson? Why or why not? Could any of these sentences be used to describe the purpose or meaning of a story? Do you know a literary term which tells the total meaning of a story?
3. Explain that the *theme* of a story can be described simply as its "total meaning." The theme or purpose of a story usually represents a lesson or an observation by the author about life and life's experiences. Without a theme a story would not have much significance and probably would not be much of a story. Occasionally, a good story violates traditional themes.
4. Ask the children to recall stories or incidents in stories which might be examples, such as *Robin Hood* or *Huckleberry Finn; Where the Wild Things Are; Danny: The Champion of the World.*
5. Have the children explain, as they discuss story characters who are involved in "morally bad" themes, why the children think

the themes are bad. Invite a variety of opinions. A healthy discussion should lead to a certain amount of disagreement and, hopefully, some critical analyses of human values, morals, and characteristics. Children can begin to relate these ideas to real-life values.

6. Pass back the children's original stories. After each child has reread his or her own story, give the following assignments to the class:
   a. Write one sentence which tells the theme of your own story.
   b. Write the kind of theme you think your story has. (For example, is it a morally good one or a morally bad one? Does it teach a lesson? Is it just an observation of life?)
7. Identify and discuss the themes of (a) *Charlotte's Web*, by E.B. White; (b) Leo Lionni's works; and (c) Beatrix Potter's works.

Recommended Reading

The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, by Samuel L. Clemens (Explain how Clemens came to adopt Mark Twain as his pseudonym.)
The Forgotten Door, a thought-provoking story by Alexander Key
Harriet the Spy, by Louise Fitzhugh
The Hundred Dresses, by Eleanor Estes
Little Rascal, by Sterling North
Macaroon, by Julia Cunningham
No Flying in the House, by Betty Brock
Owls in the Family, by Farley Mowatt
Secret Language, by Ursula Nordstrom
Violet, another story by Julia Cunningham

Lesson Four
Identification and Discussion of Character Traits

In Lesson Four the pupils are helped to identify and appreciate the roles that are played by the characters in a story.

Discussion

1. What makes you (pupils) like some characters better than others?
2. Which characters who possess some good traits stand out in your mind?
3. What characteristics make you dislike some characters?
4. What stories have you read lately that portray both bad and good characters? Does it take you very long to decide who the "good guy" is? How about the "bad guy"?

5. Do you know that the struggle between the bad characters and the good characters is what writers call *conflict*? Why do you suppose writers want their characters to be involved in some type of conflict? Sometimes there is conflict between a person and his or her own personality traits. (How do you feel after you hurt someone when you really didn't mean to do it? With whom are you angry?) A good character can have bad character traits also, and these traits will cause conflict within the character. Why do you think an author writes about self-conflict? Why is it that the primary ingredient of a story is people? Their thoughts, emotions, actions, and words are the most significant aspects of any story. Writers must create clear images of their characters, and the reader must give attention to the characterizations to understand and appreciate the story itself.

Activities

1. Analyze a story character known to the class by discussing the following aspects of character development:
   a. Physical description
   b. Reactions to story situations
   c. The character's speech patterns
   d. Reactions of other characters to him or her
   e. Conversations of others about the character
2. Select a character in the books the children are reading. Have the children choose passages in which the author is developing a character. Have them look for changes in the character's personality as the story develops. Ask, How did this person turn bad? How did that person turn good?
3. Discuss how these character changes might occur in real life.
4. Discuss how characters might have acted differently in the story situation if environmental conditions had been different.
5. Discuss what makes for a truly interesting personality. Is it always one who is good, kind, and agreeable? How about Napoleon, Caesar, Hitler, or Long John Silver? What about Harriet in *Harriet the Spy*? What do we mean by personality? What kinds of influences do strong personalities exert on the plot of a story? What influences have strong personalities had on world history?
6. Discuss how children can make the characters in their own stories clearer. Is there conflict between or within the characters? Is the conflict clear? Give the children time to rewrite their stories to improve the characters.

Recommended Reading

Abel's Island, by William Steig
The Bully of Barkham Street, by Mary S. Stolz
Charlotte's Web, by Beatrix Potter
The Courage of Sarah Noble, by Alice Dalgliesh
From the Mixed-Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler, by E. L. Koenigsburg
The Grizzly, by Annabel Johnson and Edgar Johnson
The Hundred Dresses, by Eleanor Estes
It's Like This, Cat, by Emily C. Neville
Jennifer, Hecate, Macbeth, William McKinley and Me, Elizabeth, by E. L. Koenigsburg
Jenny's Corner, by Frederic Bell
Nothing Is Impossible, by Dorothy Aldis
Thee, Hannah, by Marguerite D'Angeli
Wrinkle in Time, by Madeleine L'Engle
Zia, by Scott O'Dell

Lesson Five
Recognition of Feelings, Moods, and Story Tone

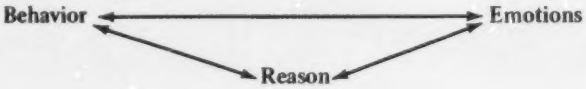
People behave in many different ways, and their behavior is based on reason, emotion, moods, instinct, imagination, memory, the will to act or not to act, and so on. A well-written story reflects, therefore, the complexity of human nature.

Discussion and Activities

1. Why do you (pupils) think authors let their characters do or say things that may be foolish or thoughtless instead of always doing or saying what is reasonable and intelligent?
2. In real life do we always do or say what we know to be the most reasonable and intelligent way of acting or speaking?
3. What do you think causes people in real life to do the things they do?
4. An author frequently lets the reader "discover" what a character is like or how the character feels by telling what the character is doing or saying. How is this method better than the method of telling the reader directly what the character is like or feels?
5. Select passages from books which are illustrative of strong emotions and have the children identify the emotions and their causes.
6. Do you find yourself pretending to be a certain character or even several characters in a story? This is called *identifying*

with a character. Who can give examples of identifying with persons described in books you have read recently?

7. When authors succeed in getting the reader to identify with story characters, they lead the reader toward the mood desired. Can you think of examples of emotions you have felt while reading certain stories?
8. Why do you think that authors don't tell the reader immediately how the characters feel? Why do authors deliberately hold back information that the reader is curious about?
9. It has been said that people do most of the things they do because of two factors—their reason and their emotions. What do you think?
10. Discuss the interactions implied in the following diagram:



11. Do you think that a person's emotions can influence reasoning as well as behavior? Would you say that a person's reasoning might influence emotions and behavior? Think of examples that illustrate mutual influences between emotions, reason, and behavior.
12. Invite the children to cite from books they have already read or are reading now specific examples that illustrate (a) actions motivated by reason; and (b) actions motivated by emotion. Ask the children to evaluate the actions in terms of the consequences.
13. Do you think that when an author is attempting to establish a certain mood or atmosphere in a story, the author depends mostly on the reader's reason or mostly on emotions?
14. Do people in other occupations use emotion as part of their strategy? What about a salesman or a politician or a schoolteacher?
15. Have the children make judgments about their original stories in terms of actions motivated by their own reason or emotions. Ask them to tell which factors (reason or emotion) had the most influence in establishing the moods of their stories.

Recommended Reading

Brown Rabbit: Her Story, by Evangeline F. Morse
Evan's Corner, by Elizabeth Hill

Jazz Man, by Mary H. Weik
Maggie Rose: Her Birthday Christmas, by Ruth Sawyers
Oh Lord, I Wish I Was a Buzzard, by Polly Greenberg

Lesson Six
The Fun of Discovery

Arousing the reader's sense of discovery is one of the most attractive qualities of good fiction writing. Elements of suspense, mystery, and surprise all contribute to this quality. Because young people are naturally curious, the emphasis in this lesson is on their love of discovery.

Discussion

1. Have you (pupils) ever gone to a movie and arrived a few minutes before it ended?
2. Could seeing the last part of a motion picture spoil the story for you if you stayed and saw if from the beginning? Why or why not?
3. Why do children enjoy hunting for Easter eggs or playing "hide-and-go-seek"? How do you feel when someone reveals the location of a hidden object before you find it?
4. What if someone tells the answer to a problem or a riddle just before you get it figured out?
5. How many of you have ever read the last few pages of a story before reading it all the way through? Do you think this practice is desirable?
6. Do you believe that people usually enjoy finding out things for themselves more than just having someone tell them? Why do authors often use the fun of discovery as a writing technique?

Activities

1. Call for examples of suspense-building methods and surprise techniques used by authors.
2. List ways in which people in other kinds of occupations and professions make effective use of planned discovery devices. Discuss television programs, commercials, "kiddie shows," movie serials, and daily comic strips.
3. Return the class's original stories and ask the children to evaluate their own use of discovery as a strategy in writing. Perhaps they will need additional time to work on their stories in order to use the "fun of discovery" technique more effectively or to apply the technique if they have not already done so. Collect all the stories for future evaluation and reference.

Books on Discovery

Brighty of the Grand Canyon, by Marguerite Henry
The Bushbabies, by William Stevenson
The Incredible Journey, by Sheila Burnford
The King of the Wind, another book by Marguerite Henry
Old Yeller, a favorite with many young people, by Fred Gipson

Lesson Seven
Figurative and Descriptive Language

Authors make books come alive when they make good use of descriptive and figurative language.

Discussion

1. Figurative language—similes and metaphors. Discuss the following phrases:
   a. The party was not a surprise because Bob had spilled the beans.
   b. The boys nearly died laughing.

   What is meant by these phrases? Explain that most of us use such expressions in our speech and writing and they are called figures of speech. We sometimes refer to this kind of speaking or writing as figurative language.
2. Can you give some other examples?
3. Authors let their characters talk naturally, and sometimes the characters use expressions that are not completely true in a literal sense but have become accepted as traditional and popular figures of speech. These figures help others to understand us more clearly. Discuss the following:
   a. I will go out into the world.
   b. Mr. Murdy had a face like a rock.
   c. She took the girl into a room full of yarn.
   d. Her nose must have been a foot long.
   e. Steve was as tall as a tree.
4. Ask questions such as the following to spur discussion about figurative writing: How does an author make characters and situations in stories seem real to the reader? Do you become more interested in a character if you know what the character looks like? What are some other ways in which we get a clear picture of a character?
5. An author may say one thing; but because of when, where, or how it is said, the author may mean something else. The author does so to create an image. What do you think the author means by each of the following sentences?

a. "This is not a man's world," Clayte said, "and it's not going to be a man's picnic, either."
b. Annabelle felt little goose pimples come out on her backbone.
c. "Hey, umpire!" he shouted. "You blind?"
d. Was Dood's face red!

6. *Similes.* Similes are descriptions which compare one thing with another; for example: white as snow, hot as fire, quiet as a mouse.

   The author gives one a picture or image to make an idea more dramatic or clear.

   Explain to the children: "We have all read stories and other material in which the authors gave such good descriptions that we could almost 'see' the people or things in the printed words. Have you noticed that authors sometimes create a clear mental picture of something by comparing it to something entirely different? For example, 'She sat there, quiet as a mouse.' Can you think of other examples? What are comparisons of this kind called?"

   Write *simile* on the board and have the pupils say the word aloud. When a writer uses similes such as "white as snow" or "hot as fire," what does the writer assume that the reader already knows?

   Writers often compare things or actions to other familiar things or actions in order to produce a clearer picture. What do you think the author of the following similes had in mind when using them?
   a. Quick as a wink
   b. Strong as an ox

7. *Metaphors.* Metaphors are another way of describing things. Here we call them something else or use words that stand for some other thing, quality, or acts.

   Review what a simile is. What clue is used to help the reader recognize a phrase as a simile? (Remind the pupils that the words *like a, as a,* and *than* are used between the two things being compared.)

   Another way to describe things clearly is to call them something else or to use words that stand for some other thing, quality, or action. The words chosen by the author should be familiar to the reader. Examples of this device are "frozen with fear," "green with envy," "burst into laughter." What are these expressions called? Write a metaphor on the board and have the

children repeat it aloud. Ask the children to think of other metaphors.

What does "frozen with fear" mean? Does someone really freeze into a statue of ice when he or she is frightened? What does "green with envy" mean? Do people really turn green when they are envious? What does "burst into laughter" mean? Does the person who laughs suddenly and heartily really burst wide open? Why do you think this type of figurative language is used by so many authors? Ask whether someone can explain the difference between a simile and a metaphor.

8. *Descriptive language.* Included are local color, straight description or general color, and atmosphere:
   a. Local color. Words are used to make clear a certain image, scene, or situation. Read the following passage and let students describe for themselves the place they "see":

      The monkeys in the treetops stopped their chattering; the capybara ceased his scurrying and stood quietly, trembling. The herons, knee-deep in water along the riverbank, took flight. Farther up the bank, an ugly jacare cayman, invisible in the dim moonlight, slithered deeper into the mud.

   b. Straight description (general color). Share these examples and request others: "the blue sky," "a tiny dog with a stubby tail," and "the sagging old house."
   c. *Atmosphere.* Share these words and look for others: "the whirring wind"; "a silent lake, hidden away in the dark hills"; "the ragged little boy stood alone on the deserted playground."

   Note that atmospheric words can be used for a number of purposes and are almost always found in "local color" stories.

Activities

1. Ask the pupils to find examples of similes.
2. Have them write some original similes.
3. Have them check their own stories for examples of similes.
4. Ask the pupils to find other examples of metaphors.
5. Have them compare metaphors and similes.
6. Ask the pupils to review their stories.
7. Have them discuss the following:
   a. His eyes dropped out of his head!
   b. She turned green with envy.
   c. He put his foot in his mouth.
   d. The doctor was tied up.

e. Someone spilled the beans!
f. The wind caught the sails.
g. Lights flashed in his eyes.
h. Bells rang in his ears.
i. A bright yellow flame shot out of the spout.

8. Present a highly descriptive paragraph. Have the students underline all descriptive words and compare how the paragraph would read if the words were eliminated.
9. Find examples of vivid images of story characters and their moods, emotions, and feelings. How is this matter handled in a movie or television show or a play?
10. Give students time to improve sections of their own writing, making better use of figurative or descriptive language.
11. Start a class booklet with figures of speech and descriptive words and phrases.

Recommended Reading

Abel's Island, by William Steig
Blue Willow, by Doris Gates
Call It Courage, by Armstrong Sperry
Chitty-Chitty-Bang-Bang, by Ian Fleming
Courage of Sarah Noble, by Alice Dalgliesh
"The Elephant's Child," a tale from *Just So Stories*, by Rudyard Kipling
Hailstones and Halibut Bones, by Mary O'Neill
Hurry Home, Candy, by Meindert DeJong
Island of the Blue Dolphins, by Scott O'Dell
Listen, Rabbit, by Aileen L. Fisher
Sing Down the Moon, by Scott O'Dell
Strawberry Girl, by Lois Lenski
Tom Tit Tot, by Evaline Ness
The Wheel on the School, another book by Meindert DeJong
When Clay Sings, by Byrd Baylor

Lesson Eight: Point of View

In this lesson students will have a chance to recognize the point of view from which a story is written and to organize their own writing in such a way that it has a definite, clear, predetermined point of view.

Discussion

1. *Author-observer point of view*. The teacher may wish to ask: How would you describe a mountain if you were standing on the very top of it? How would you describe the same mountain

if you were standing at the foot of it? Why are these descriptions of the same mountain so different?
Why do you think the point of view has anything to do with story writing? Whose point of view is usually represented in most stories? Is it the main character's point of view, or is it the storyteller's point of view? Why do you think an author usually tells the whole story from one point of view?

Have you noticed that many stories seem to have been written by someone who just happened to be there watching when the story took place? It is as though the author had been an observer. In this type of story, the author-observer tells what happens, what each character says and does. The author-observer usually writes in terms of what happens to the main character in his or her story, but the impression is given that the author-observer doesn't know what is going to happen next. In a story of this kind, do you sometimes feel as though you, too, are watching it take place and not just reading about it? If so, the author has been successful in his or her attempts to tell the story from the point of view of an observer or a witness.

The teacher may then wish to ask those children who are reading mystery stories to tell from whose point of view they believe that each story is told and why. (This analysis should lead pupils naturally into further discussion of stories told from the point of view of an author-observer.)

2. *Omniscient point of view.* The teacher may wish to state: In some stories authors don't limit their observations just to what happens to the main characters; they observe all the others. Also, they might write as though they know what is happening in Chicago, in London, or in any place at all. Still further, they can tell you at any time what their story people are thinking and how the people feel about things. How many of you are reading books written in this manner? How many of you have written your stories from this point of view?

   This literary method is called the omniscient point of view. The author appears to know everything about all of the story people, and it is a very common method of storytelling.

   The teacher may then wish to ask a pupil to look up the meaning and origin of the word omniscient. The findings should be basically similar to the following:

   OMNISCIENT, adjective (from Latin: *omni,* "all," + *scientia,* "knowledge")—having complete or infinite knowledge, awareness, or understanding; perceiving all things.

Activities

1. Have the children select a book (which they have read or are reading) written from the omniscient point of view and ask them to be ready to give reasons for their choice.
2. Likewise, have the children select a book written from an observer's point of view and ask them to be ready to give reasons for their choice.
3. Ask the pupils, Which type of story would an author probably write if the tale were based on a personal experience?
4. Have the children read their own stories orally, either in small literary circles or to the whole class. Encourage them to decide from whose point of view each story has been written. Perhaps some will want to change their stories so that the stories are written from a different point of view.

Recommended Reading

Two books by Robert Lawson—*Ben and Me* and *Mr. Revere and I*
Three books by Mary S. Stolz—*The Bully of Barkham Street, The Dog on Barkham Street,* and *The Noonday Friends*

Lesson Nine
First-Person and Third-Person Stories

The intent of Lesson Nine is to combine what the children have learned about point of view with the concept of "person" as applied to creative writing.

Discussion

Note: Prior to an in-depth teaching of this lesson, the children will need to understand first-, second-, and third-person grammatical relationships. The chart that follows can be used to teach or review these concepts.

PERSON CHART

First person singular	I
Second person singular	you
Third person singular	he, she, it
First person plural	we
Second person plural	you (more than one)
Third person plural	they

After the teacher has determined that the functions and relationships of "person" in creative expression are throughly understood by the class, the following questions, topics, and activities can be utilized:

1. *Third-person stories.* Ask the pupils:
   a. When the author tells about people and events in a story, which person do you think is used? How can you tell which person is used in a story?
   b. Is it possible to have a story written in the third person even though there is no conversation in the story, as in some animal stories?
   c. A story in the third person is told from the observer's or from the omniscient point of view; in either case, the narrative tells what he, she, it, and they did or saw. Would a third-person story be told from outside or inside the story? Would we call the author or storyteller an outsider in this instance?

   Ask a group of children to select certain passages that illustrate the use of the third person.
2. *First-person stories.*
   a. The teacher might say: Let us suppose that a story is written as though the author were one of the characters in it. In which person would it need to be written?
   b. What is another term for first-person stories? Can you think of examples of "I" stories, or first-person stories (*Ben and Me, Black Beauty, Island of the Blue Dolphins,* and the like)? Would these be told by an outsider or by an insider? Why? Stories written in this manner use the author-participant point of view. But who really is telling any story? Why do you suppose an author would want to tell the story from the inside, as though someone within the story were telling it? (The reader identifies with the character, who is apparently telling the story and taking part in the action. The reader experiences what the author-participant experiences, and—like the author—is an insider.)
   c. Would the author-participant need to be the hero or main character in the story? Think of stories in which the character who seems to be telling the story is not the hero. Do you believe that a first-person story would be an easier to write than other types? Invite the children to give their reasons.
   d. Try retelling some familiar fairy tales or fables as first-person stories. Have different children tell the same story from the points of view of different children characters in the story. For example, "The Hare and the Tortoise" could be told by the tortoise as the winner or by the hare as the loser. Encourage creative embellishments to these stories.

Activities

1. Have each child recall an incident that has happened to him or her and ask the child to write it down or tell about it orally, using the third person as though the incident happened to someone else.
2. Make the following assignment: The children should write a first-person account of what they did and thought about from the time they awakened until they arrived at school on the day of the assignment. Encourage the class to try hard to include any thoughts involving decisions, reactions to others, and drifting thoughts.
3. The following two books will be found particularly helpful in this lesson: *Black Beauty*, by Anna Sewell, and *From the Mixed-Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler*, by E.L. Koenigsburg.

Recommended Books

Stories Told in the First Person

Ben and Me – Robert Lawson
Blubber – Judy Blume
By Crumbs, It's Mine – Patricia Beatty
In My Mother's House – Ann Nolan Clark (grade one)
Jennifer, Hecate, Macbeth, William McKinley and Me, Elizabeth – *E.L. Koenigsburg*
May I Bring a Friend? – Beatrice S. De Regniers (grade one)
Me, California Perkins – Patricia Beatty
Mr. Revere & I – Robert Lawson
Nelly Custis' Diary – Miriam A. Bourne
Poor Richard in France – Ferdinand N. Monjo (grade one)
Rebellion Town: Williamsburg, 1776 – Theodore Taylor
The Real Me – Betty Miles
Strawberry Girl – Lois Lenski
Teddy Bear Habit – James L. Collier

Stories Told in the Third Person

The Book of Giant Stories, by David Harrison (grade three)
Everyone Knows What a Dragon Looks Like, by Jay Williams (grade three)
The Fool of the World & the Flying Ship, by Arthur Ransome (grade three)
The Funny Little Woman, by Arlene Masel (grade three)
Rabbit Hill, by Robert Lawson
The Red Balloon, by A. Lamorisse (grade three)

Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, by Randall Jarrell (grade three)
The Tale of Czar Sultan, by Alexander Pushkin
The Tale of the Golden Cockerel, or *The Prince and the Swan Princess*, by Alexander Pushkin

Lesson Ten
Analysis of Mystery Stories

In this lesson the learners become acquainted with the essential characteristics of mystery stories. They are able to distinguish readily between this kind of creative writing and other kinds.

Students will also learn to make judgments about mystery stories in terms of such qualities as suspense, logical clues, and appropriate outcomes.

Discussion

The questions and explanations that follow are meant to help the children become knowledgeable about mystery story writing:

1. How many of you have read and enjoyed mystery stories? Can you name a few? What is it about these stories that makes them fun to read? Are most mystery stories usually easy to follow? Why does an author use a simple, direct style?
2. Remember that nearly every story has one main problem to be solved. When do we usually learn about this problem in most stories? When do we learn about the problem in most mystery stories? What kind of problem is usually involved in a mystery story (for example, some form of crime or the threat of an illegal or violent act)?
3. What do you find yourself, the reader, doing about the crime as you follow the adventures of the hero in a mystery story? Why does an author give the reader just a few clues at a time? When you finish a mystery story, you can usually think back and see how you might have solved the mystery. In fact, alert readers can sometimes figure out who committed the crime before they find out for sure. Why is it important for the author to be 'fair' to the reader in providing clues?

The characteristics of mystery stories are as follows:

1. The main problem, or *catastrophe*, is identified at the beginning of the story.
2. The reader has the experience of accompanying the main character in going through the steps of looking for the solution to the problem.

3. The reader is given an opportunity to solve the crime (or problem) himself (herself) by discovering clues that are buried in the story.

Encourage the children to apply these characteristics to mystery stories with which they are familiar.

Activities

The following activities are recommended for pupil involvement:

1. Think about the mystery stories you have read. What made them enjoyable to read? What were your feelings toward the "bad guys"? Have you ever experienced a kind of friendship for, or felt sorry for, a story character who turned out to be guilty of a crime? Why do you suppose an author gives the villain in a story some desirable traits?
2. Choose one of your favorite mystery stories. Use the same general plot but change the sequence of events so that the guilty character is free and the hero is accused. Describe the feelings of both. Change the ending so that the problem is solved in another way. Describe how the characters feel and what they say and do because of the changes in events.
3. Are the solutions to most mystery stories logical and reasonable?
4. Can you remember reading a mystery where the solution to the problem seemed unreasonable or unbelievable or just too much of a coincidence? (Have the pupils look up the meaning of *deus ex machina.* Comment on this device.)
5. Ask the children who have written mystery stories to read them to the class. Evaluate them on the basis of the criteria developed in this lesson. Some children may want to work together in discussion circles, evaluating either their own stories or published stories they have already read. Provide class time for further in-depth discussion.

Recommended Reading

The Alligator Case, by William Pene Du Bois
Egypt Game, by Zilpha K. Snyder
Encyclopedia Brown stories (a series of books in which a boy detective is the hero), by Donald J. Sobol
Freddy the Detective, by Walter R. Brooks

Culminating Project: Writing an Original Story

This section is intended as an aid to students in writing an original story based on research in an area of their choice. Students will predetermine and consciously incorporate elements of effective story writing in their own work.

Discussion

These questions should motivate students to see research as an important and exciting part of good story writing:

1. How does an author become sufficiently informed about a topic to be able to write a book or a story or an article about it?
2. Are most of our learning experiences firsthand, or are most of them secondhand? Develop the term *vicarious.*
3. What is meant by a *vicarious experience?* Why is this element so important in the writing and reading of stories?
4. Do you believe that you could become an expert on some topic by reading about it?
5. *Research* is the term we use to describe—in one short but useful word—finding, reading, viewing, collecting, and otherwise acquiring information about a particular topic.

Suggested Story Sequence

1. SELECT a topic. Narrow it down; be specific.
2. GATHER books containing information on the topic of your choice (encyclopedias, books on science and geography, and other sources—from the classroom, from the school library, from the public library, from your home, and so forth).
3. LOOK for needed information by (a) using the table of contents; (b) using the index; and (c) skimming the book (or section or article).
4. READ your sources of information carefully. Take notes as the need arises.
5. LIST ten or more facts which you consider particularly important to your story. Give the source for each.

6. DECIDE on the kind of story you want to write; for example, humorous, adventure, mystery, real-life. Also, choose your point of view.
7. PLAN your story. A large chart would be appropriate at this stage. The following may be listed on the chart as aids or reminders for the class:
   a. Who will be my main character?
   b. When and where shall my story begin (setting, introduction)?
   c. What will be the problem in my story?
   d. How will I tell about my problem (action)?
   e. How shall the problem be solved (climax)?
   f. How shall my story end (conclusion)?
8. WRITE your story. Remember the main parts: the setting, the problem, the climax, and the ending. Hold on to the central theme. Make your characters come alive. By choosing your words and phrases wisely, establish the kind of mood and atmosphere you want the story to have. On the last page write the theme of your story.
9. ILLUSTRATE your story in whatever way you think would be helpful.
10. MAKE a table of contents. Include such entries as the introduction if any; titles of chapters or parts if your story is long; list of illustrations; glossary of terms if needed; and the bibliography.

Have the children read their stories to one another. Then let the class analyze and evaluate the stories in terms of the skills and understandings acquired thus far.

Activities

1. *Problem-solving sessions.* Encourage children to share ways in which they solved problems during their story writing.
2. *Illustration.* Consider a possible miniunit on the art of illustration. Compare the styles and techniques used by Keats, Sendak, Potter, and others.
3. *Bookbinding.* Allow the children to bind their own books.

Personal-Interest Reading

The preceding lessons will help children become more critical as they evaluate literary works. Such skill will enable them to become more discriminating in their choices and help them find deeper meaning in what they read.

Gifted primary children should not be required to write long, formal book reviews; but there are some activities which will enhance their skills in reading literature. For example, the children may be asked to answer the following questions about plot:

1. How do you know who the main character is?
2. In what part of the book is the setting provided? Does it change? In what part or parts? Why do you think it changes?
3. What is the main problem or action in your book? How do you know it is the main problem?
4. How was the problem solved? How did the solving of the problem change or influence the lives of those people who were involved?
5. How did the story end? Would you have made it end differently? Why or why not?

Or the children may be asked to perform activities involving reading comprehension:

1. See if you can find the sentence or paragraph that best summarizes the whole story. What is the theme of your story?
2. Find three sentences that tell the most important things that happened in the story. In what part of the story did these sentences appear? How did they help in building the plot?
3. Use any medium to illustrate the main idea of the story; for example, puppetry, diorama, a chart, a creative art activity, poetry, a monologue, a dialogue, a flannel board story, role playing, a tape recording, a radio or television program.
4. Describe or write a different ending to the story you have just finished reading.
5. Explain in what way two of the characters in the story were alike. Explain in what way they were different.

6. Tell how the characters changed during the course of the story and why they changed.
7. Find the sentences and words that best describe a certain character or a certain setting.
8. Locate passages that reveal the author's point of view.
9. Tell how you or someone else would have written the same story from a different point of view.

Although long, formal book reviews should not be required, it is beneficial to let the children tell about the books they have read. A good technique is to have the children complete the form presented here:

SAMPLE BOOK REVIEW

Title _____

Author _____

Publisher _____

Date published _____

Other books (written by the same author) which I have read _____

_____

_____

Briefly tell about the book you have read. You may use the following guidelines. Spaces are provided for any notes you want to make.

- *Setting.* (Who? Where? When? What? Why?) _____

  _____

- *Problem.* (State the problem; describe one main event and the buildup leading to the solution of the problem.) _____

  _____

  _____

- *Climax.* (How was the problem finally solved?) _____

  _____

- *Ending.* (How did the characters in the story react when the problem was solved?) _____

  _____

It is recommended that 3″ x 5″ cards be used to keep a record of the many books read by the gifted child. The items shown in the

following illustration should be adequate to obtain the essential information desired:

SAMPLE RECORD CARD

Pupil's name _____

Book title _____

Author _____

Date started _____ Date completed _____

Comments about the book _____

_____

_____

(If you need more room for comments, use the back of the card.)

As gifted children develop a basic understanding of literature, an ongoing evaluation is necessary. The suggested outline that follows is intended to (1) guide the children's activities and discussions during the course of their study; and (2) motivate the children to continue their literary explorations throughout their growing years and into adult life:

PROPOSED OUTLINE FOR THE EVALUATION OF LITERATURE

(Book-length stories or short stories)

1. Does the story have a good plot?
   a. Is the plot well-constructed?
   b. Is the plot clear?
   c. How does the story appear on a story-line diagram?
   d. Does the story identify a problem and then solve it?
2. What makes a good word picture?
   a. Why is description important?
   b. How does the author use the reader's past experiences?
   c. Why are similes and metaphors useful both to the author and to the reader?
3. What are metaphors and how are they used?
4. What are similes and how are they used?
5. In what ways do writers use or refer to the five senses (sight, hearing, smell, touch, taste)?
6. How strong is the element of vicarious experience?
   a. Bear in mind that many of our experiences are vicarious.
   b. Most of our knowledge comes to us in this manner.
   c. We have a vicarious experience every time we hear or read a story, or whenever a person tells us something that has happened to him or her.

7. Why does the main character have to suffer?
   a. The problem concerning him or her is clearly stated.
   b. His or her problem grows larger or becomes more intense.
   c. It is good to face these facts: life is dull without problems, but life is sad if problems are never solved.
8. Whose point of view is represented?
   a. How would the story be different from another character's point of view?
   b. Would you have used a different point of view if you had written the story?
9. Why do authors let animals talk?
   a. Do you see a useful purpose in this technique?
   b. Do you have any objections to it?
10. Is the story written in the first person or in the third person?
   a. "I" stories
   b. "He" or "she" stories
11. The fun of discovery is important.
   a. Why does the author let the reader discover certain facts? Why does he or she not just tell us "straight across the board"?
   b. How does the author apply this technique of discovery?
12. What makes a literary classic?
   a. All really good stories have similar characteristics that hold the reader's interest.
   b. Believability and probability are good ingredients; but so is the charm of fantasy. The most improbable story can be a classic if it is well written.
   c. Literary skill is not enough; the story must also be deeply and warmly human.
   d. The story must have a basic, universal appeal.
13. The quality of kindness is essential to good creative writing.
   a. All great story people are kind, even if they are neither gentle nor handsome nor beautiful.
   b. All great real-life people are kind, too.
   c. *Greatness* is not synonymous here with fame or fortune but with strength of character, courage, and compassion.
   d. Kindness makes up for many flaws and failures.
   e. A kind person can be a great person despite his or her own defects.
   f. Kindness is a power that cannot be measured; it reaches into many lives and improves the human condition.

76-246 (03–1004) 76122 300 2-78 4M

Gifted Education Publications Available from the California State Department of Education

The following publications in the gifted education series are available from the State Department of Education, each at a price of 65 cents per copy, plus sales tax:

*Curriculum Guide for Teaching Gifted Children Literature in Grades One Through Three (1978)**

Curriculum Guide for Teaching Gifted Children Science in Grades One Through Three (1977)†

Curriculum Guide for Teaching Gifted Children Science in Grades Four Through Six (1977)†

Curriculum Guide for Teaching Gifted Children Social Sciences in Grades One Through Three (1977)†

Curriculum Guide for Teaching Gifted Children Social Sciences in Grades Four Through Six (1977)†

Special Programs for Gifted Pupils (1962)

Teaching Gifted Children Art in Grades Four Through Six (1973)

*Teaching Gifted Children Music in Grades One Through Six (1978)**

Teaching Gifted Students Art in Grades Seven Through Nine (1973)

Teaching Gifted Students Art in Grades Ten Through Twelve (1973)

Teaching Gifted Students Foreign Language in Grades Ten Through Twelve (1973)

*Teaching Gifted Students Literature in Grades Seven Through Nine (1978)**

*Teaching Gifted Students Literature and Language in Grades Nine Through Twelve (1978)**

Teaching Gifted Students Social Sciences in Grades Seven Through Nine (1977)††

Payment should accompany order. Purchase orders without checks are accepted from governmental agencies in California.

Orders should be addressed to Publications Sales, California State Department of Education, P.O. Box 271, Sacramento, CA 95802.

**Scheduled for publication early in 1978.*

†Revision of publication originally issued in 1970.

††Revision of publication originally issued in 1972.

△77122—300 6-77 4M LDA

35